

'CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM' AND 'AMERICA FIRST' ARE UNCHRISTIAN

AN ESSAY BY

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'CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM' AND 'AMERICA FIRST' ARE UNCHRISTIAN

By Larry Southwick

First, let me be clear – I am Catholic, Christian and fully espouse Christian principles in how we, as a nation should act and treat all others, both in our country and around the world. But it is my opinion and common to many others, the current administration and the Republican party in general, including many self-described Catholics and Christians, are in conflict and contradiction to what it really means to be Christian.

I'm not basing this solely on my opinion or beliefs but on commonly accessible information and definitions (on the internet, links provided).

Christianity in the USA

<https://www.bing.com/search> for 'how many Christian denominations are there in the USA'

Christianity is the dominant religion in the United States, with over 65% of the population identifying as Christian. According to the World Christian Database, there are 67 different denominations of Christianity present in the U.S., ranging from small fringe denominations to culturally and politically influential churches.

Modern Christianity in the United States is largely divided into two camps: mainline Protestantism and evangelicalism. While both can be considered distinctly American phenomena, they are very different in their approach to Christianity and the practice of faith. The lines between the two traditions are often blurred, as many churches and organizations incorporate elements of both approaches.

Christian Principles

What does it mean to be Christian? <https://www.bing.com/search> for 'Christian principles'

'Christian Principles': Love, Honesty, Humility, Stewardship, Justice, Integrity, and Accountability

Bible Hub, https://biblehub.com/topical/l/love_as_the_guiding_principle.htm

***Love**, as the guiding principle, is the heart of biblical teaching and the essence of the Christian life. It reflects the character of God, fulfills the law, and is the mark of true discipleship.*

Love, as a guiding principle, is a central theme throughout the Bible, serving as the foundation for God's relationship with humanity and the ethical framework for human interactions. The Bible presents love not merely as an emotion but as an active, selfless commitment to the well-being of others, reflecting the character of God Himself.

Also, see *Christian Love as the Principle of Christian Life* at <https://www.catholicbridge.com/moral-theology/G-1-25-A.php>

John 13:34: *I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*

And 1 Cor 13: *If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.*

Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, love is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, embraces all things.

Love never fails. --- So, faith, hope and love remain, these three, but the greatest of these is love.

Pope Leo said the Church would only grow if it could attract people with a message of God's love for everyone,

"Only love is trustworthy; only love is credible," said the pope. "While unity attracts, division scatters."

[https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/pope-leo-urges-catholic-cardinals-to-create-more-inclusive-church/ar-AA1TNV9X?](https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/pope-leo-urges-catholic-cardinals-to-create-more-inclusive-church/ar-AA1TNV9X?ocid=msedgntp&pc=U531&cvid=695fe48239b142f1862e2381509c3187&ei=79)

[ocid=msedgntp&pc=U531&cvid=695fe48239b142f1862e2381509c3187&ei=79](https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/pope-leo-urges-catholic-cardinals-to-create-more-inclusive-church/ar-AA1TNV9X?ocid=msedgntp&pc=U531&cvid=695fe48239b142f1862e2381509c3187&ei=79)

In my own terms, love is the distance that we are from God: the greater our love, the closer we are to God; the lesser our love, the further we are from God. Truly and literally, love is the pathway to heaven.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honesty>

Honesty or truthfulness is a facet of moral character that connotes positive and virtuous attributes such as integrity, truthfulness, straightforwardness (including straightforwardness of conduct: earnestness), along with the absence of lying, cheating, theft, etc. Honesty also involves being trustworthy, loyal, fair, and sincere.

A reputation for honesty is denoted by terms like reputability and trustworthiness. Honesty about one's future conduct, loyalties, or commitments is called accountability, reliability, dependability, or conscientiousness.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/honesty>

- *Honesty implies a refusal to lie, steal, or deceive in any way*
- *integrity implies trustworthiness and incorruptibility to a degree that one is incapable of being false to a trust, responsibility, or pledge.*

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humility>

Humility is the quality of being humble. While older definitions, such as the 1998 Oxford Dictionary entry, described humility as having a "low opinion of oneself" or "not

being proudful", more recent psychological and philosophical definitions emphasize having an "accurate opinion of oneself". This modern view includes expressing modesty appropriately, possessing clear goal orientation, openness, broad-mindedness, and a non-imposing mentality.

<https://www.bing.com/search?q=humility+in+the+bible&FORM=QSRE1>

Humility in the Bible is a significant virtue that emphasizes recognizing our limitations and dependence on God. It is portrayed as essential for godliness, with teachings encouraging believers to adopt a spirit of gentleness and meekness, challenging societal norms that prioritize power and self-promotion. The Bible provides numerous examples of humility, including the teachings of Jesus and the lives of biblical figures, illustrating how humility can transform relationships and communities. Additionally, various verses throughout Scripture highlight the blessings associated with humility and the warnings against pride.

<https://www.openbible.info/topics/humility>

What does the Bible say about humility? 100 Biblical quotes about humility

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stewardship_\(theology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stewardship_(theology))

Stewardship *is a theological belief that humans are responsible for the world, humanity, and the gifts and resources that they have been entrusted. Believers in stewardship are usually people who believe in one God who created the universe and all that is within it, also believing that they must take care of creation and look after it. Creation includes animals and the environment. Many religions and denominations have various degrees of support for environmental stewardship. It can have political implications, such as in Christian democracy.*

A biblical world view of stewardship can be consciously defined as: "Utilizing and managing all resources God provides for the glory of God and the betterment of His creation." The central essence of biblical world view stewardship is managing everything God brings into the believer's life in a manner that honors God and impacts eternity. Stewardship begins and ends with the understanding of God's ownership of all. (followed by a list of Biblical quotes)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justice>

*In its broadest sense, **justice** is the treatment of individuals fairly. According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, the most plausible candidate for a core definition comes from the Institutes of Justinian, a 6th-century codification of Roman law, where justice is defined as "the constant and perpetual will to render to each his due".*

A society where justice has been achieved would be one in which individuals receive what they "deserve". The interpretation of what "deserve" means draws on a variety of fields and philosophical branches including ethics, rationality, law, religion, and fairness. The state may pursue justice by operating courts and enforcing their rulings.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/justice>

- *the process or result of using laws to fairly judge cases, redress wrongs, and punish crimes*
- *the quality of being just, impartial, or fair*
- *the principle or ideal of fair treatment or right action*
- *conformity to truth, fact, or reason*

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Integrity>

Integrity is the quality of being honest and having a consistent and uncompromising adherence to strong moral and ethical principles and values.[1][2] In ethics, integrity is regarded as the honesty and truthfulness or earnestness of one's actions. Integrity can stand in opposition to hypocrisy.[3] It regards internal consistency as a virtue, and suggests that people who hold apparently conflicting values should account for the discrepancy or alter those values.

One essential aspect of a consistent framework is its avoidance of any unwarranted (arbitrary) exceptions for a particular person or group—especially the person or group that holds the framework. In law, this principle of universal application requires that even those in positions of official power can be subjected to the same laws as pertain to their fellow citizens.

<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/integrity>

- *Integrity: adherence to moral and ethical principles; soundness of moral character; honesty.*
- *Synonyms: virtue, probity, rectitude*
- *Antonyms: dishonesty*

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accountability>

In ethics and governance, **accountability** is equated with answerability, culpability, liability, and the expectation of account-giving.

As in an aspect of governance, it has been central to discussions related to problems in the public sector, nonprofit, private (corporate), and individual contexts. In leadership roles, accountability is the acknowledgment of and assumption of responsibility for actions, products, decisions, and policies such as administration, governance, and implementation, including the obligation to report, justify, and be answerable for resulting consequences.

In governance, accountability has expanded beyond the basic definition of "being called to account for one's actions". It is frequently described as an account-giving relationship between individuals, e.g. "A is accountable to B when A is obliged to inform B about A's (past or future) actions and decisions, to justify them, and to suffer punishment in the case of eventual misconduct."

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/accountability>

an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions

Christian Nationalism

Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Christian-nationalism>

Christian nationalism, ideology that seeks to create or maintain a legal fusion of Christian religion with a nation's character. Advocates of Christian nationalism consider their view of Christianity to be an integral part of their country's identity and want the government to promote—or even enforce—the religion's position within it.

Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_nationalism

Christian nationalism is a form of religious nationalism that focuses on promoting the Christian views of its followers, in order to achieve prominence or dominance in political, cultural, and social life.

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/what-is-christian-nationalism-and-why-it-raises-concerns-about-threats-to-democracy>

What is Christian nationalism and why it raises concerns about threats to democracy, PBS Newshour, Feb 1, 2024,

Brad Onishi, Co-Host, "Straight White American Jesus": Christian nationalism is an ideology that is based around the idea that this is a Christian nation, that this was founded as a Christian nation, and, therefore, it should be a Christian nation today and should be so in the future.

According to survey data, Christian nationalists agree with statements like the federal government should declare the United States of America a Christian nation. Our laws should be based on Christian values. being a Christian is important if you want to be a real American.

<https://www.freedomforum.org/what-is-christian-nationalism/>

What Is Christian Nationalism? The Complete Guide, Freedom Forum,

Generally, religious scholars, sociologists and others who study Christian nationalism describe it as a belief that the United States is a country defined by Christianity. In practice, this means:

- *The government should take steps to keep the country's Christian roots and identity intact.*
- *The government should advocate Christian values and pass laws and enact policies that reflect those values.*
- *The separation of church and state is not a formal law that should be followed.*
- *God's plan is for the U.S. to be a successful nation based in Christian ideals.*

While in theory, those who advocate for Christian Nationalism should base their premise on the above 'Christian Principles,' I don't see any of those principles guiding their policies and actions, i.e., immigration, treatment of those they target, dismantling and elimination of humanitarian aid both in this country and around the world, domestic and foreign policies, environmental protection, etc. Where is Love, Honesty, Humility, Stewardship, Justice, Integrity, and Accountability in all that?

Discovery Doctrine

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discovery_doctrine

Christian Nationalism is quite similar to the Discovery Doctrine, the broad Catholic policy founded in 1452 when Pope Nicholas V issued the papal bull *Dum Diversas*, which authorized Portugal to “conquer Saracens and pagans and consign them to ‘perpetual servitude’.” And again in 1455, Pope Nicholas V issued *Romanus Pontifex*, which extended Portugal's authority to “conquer the lands of infidels and pagans for “the salvation of all” in order to “pardon ... their souls.”

Between the mid-fifteenth century and the mid-twentieth century, this idea allowed European entities to seize lands inhabited by Indigenous peoples under the guise of “discovering new land”, meaning land not inhabited by Christians. The concept of terra nullius was a major part of the discovery doctrine, particularly around the Indigenous people of North America. Terra nullius, meaning that land was empty or void, was a justification for European groups to claim that land for their country, despite the many Indigenous groups already present on the continent.

https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_16071892_quarto-abeunte-saeculo.html

We decree, therefore, that on October 12, or on the following Sunday, if the Ordinary should prefer it, in all the Cathedral churches and convent chapels throughout Spain, Italy, and the two Americas, after the office of the day there shall be celebrated a Solemn Mass of the Most Holy Trinity.

Given at Rome, from St. Peter's, on the 16th day of July, 1892, in the fifteenth year of Our Pontificate. LEO XIII

Hence, Columbus Day, the celebration of four hundred years (at that time, now over 500 years) of white European imperialism and colonialism and the model for Christian Nationalism. However, Pope Francis has formally repudiated the “Doctrine of Discovery,” acknowledging its role in justifying the colonization and exploitation of Indigenous lands and peoples.

www.vaticannews.va

On March 30, 2023, the Vatican issued a formal statement repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery. This statement was a response to decades of Indigenous demands for the Church to acknowledge its historical complicity in colonial abuses. The Vatican's declaration emphasized that the papal bulls associated with the doctrine “did not adequately reflect the equal dignity and rights of Indigenous peoples” and have never been considered expressions of the Catholic faith.

The statement also recognized that these documents were manipulated for political purposes by colonial powers to justify immoral acts against Indigenous peoples. It called for acknowledgment of the errors of the past and the need for ongoing dialogue and reconciliation with Indigenous communities.

America First

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/America_First

America First denotes a set of policies in the United States that emphasize taking foreign policy and domestic policy decisions which serve the interests of the United States before the interests of all other nations and peoples. This typically manifests

itself in policies of non-interventionism, American nationalism, and protectionist trade policy.

As a slogan in American political discourse, "America First" originated from the nativist American Party in the 1850s. The motto has been used by both Democratic and Republican politicians in the United States.

The term was promoted by President Woodrow Wilson in his 1916 presidential campaign that pledged to keep America neutral in World War I. A more non-interventionist approach gained prominence in the interwar period (1918–1939); it was also advocated by the America First Committee, a non-interventionist pressure group against U.S. entry into World War II.

The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) used the phrase at the organization's peak in the 1920s, when racist, xenophobic sentiment was widespread; it informed many of their members who ran for political office.

The Immigration Act of 1924, sponsored by Washington U.S. representative Albert Johnson, was a legislative expression of xenophobia. It targeted Japanese, eastern and southern European immigrants by excluding them on the basis of ethnicity and national origin in an effort to preserve the country's existing ethnic demographics.

America First is best known as the slogan and foreign policy advocated by the America First Committee, a non-interventionist pressure group against the American entry into World War II, which emphasized American nationalism and unilateralism in international relations. While the America First Committee had a variety of supporters in the U.S., the movement was muddled with anti-Semitic and fascist rhetoric.

President Donald Trump used the slogan in his 2016 presidential campaign and presidencies (2017–2021, 2025–present), emphasizing the U.S.'s withdrawal from international treaties and organizations in the administration's foreign policy. Some media critics have derided Trump's use of the America First policy as "America Alone".

What comes to mind when considering the above is the similarity to the Seven Deadly Sins, specifically, pride, greed, wrath, and envy. See <https://www.bing.com/search> for 'Seven Deadly Sins'

Pride: Often considered the most serious sin, pride is an excessive belief in one's abilities or attractiveness to others. It can lead to a disregard for others and a sense of superiority. In Christian theology, it is seen as the root of all other sins.

Greed (Avarice): This sin involves an insatiable desire for material wealth or gain. Greed can lead to unethical behavior and a lack of concern for others' needs.

Wrath (Anger): Wrath is intense emotional response and hatred towards others. It can manifest as a desire for revenge or punishment, leading to further violence and conflict.

Envy: Envy is the desire for others' traits, status, abilities, or situation. It can lead to resentment and a desire to bring others down.

Again, I don't see any expressions in 'America First' that reflect the above 'Christian Principles.' I fervently pray that the American people truly understand and carry out the above Christian Principles in our shared public life instead of following the so-called Christians who now govern our country.